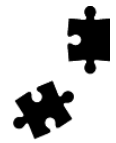


# WHAT IT MEANS TO BE THE CHURCH



## Lesson 5: The Organization of the Church

Tom Rodgers, Lead Pastor

- I. **The need for organization:** Any time people intentionally get together, some degree of organization becomes necessary (*cp. Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 14:40, 16:1–2*).
- II. **The absence of adequate organization:** People drop through the cracks without adequate organization (*cp. Acts 6:1–7*).
- III. **The existence of organization in the early church:** Basic organization was put in place soon after a group of believers in Jesus Christ began to meet together (*Acts 14:21–23; Titus 1:5*).
- IV. **The guiding principle in organization:** Any organization in a local church must give priority to the Headship of Jesus Christ.
- V. **The probable sources of organization:** The origin of the organization within local churches may at least be partially traced to the types of organization in the congregation of Israel (*cp. Numbers 11:10–17*) and Jewish synagogues, which had a board of elders presiding over it.
- VI. **The component of the plurality of leadership:** The New Testament evidences a plurality of human leaders within the organization of local churches (*cp. Philippians 1:1; Acts 20:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:12–13; Hebrews 13:17*).
- VII. **The biblical structure of organization:** The New Testament establishes a specific structure for the organization and government of local churches.
  - Jesus Christ is the “Head” and Chief Shepherd of the local church—**Ephesians 1:22–23; 1 Peter 5:4**.
  - Elders (or bishops) are undershepherds who are responsible for overseeing the process of leading the people within their church to spiritual maturity and ministry—**1 Peter 5:1–4; Acts 20:28–31**.
  - Deacons are male or female servants, who are responsible for performing tasks necessary for the health of the local church—**1 Timothy 3:8–13; Romans 16:1–2**.
  - Every member of the Body of Christ is a “believer-priest” in the church—**1 Peter 2:4–9; Revelation 1:4–6**.
  - Gifted men and women may be added to the church as staff when their training and time are deemed necessary for the effective functioning of the church ministry—**Ephesians 4:11, 1 Timothy 5:17–18**.